

**COMMERCE COMMITTEE – FEB. 25, 2009**  
**Public Testimony by**  
**Bruce Heller, Connecticut Film Center, llc**

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, Members of the Commerce Committee, my name is Bruce Heller. I am a founding partner of the Connecticut Film Center.

I have come today to address Senate Bill 176, and the Film Production Tax Credit.

CFC was founded almost four years ago as a direct result of the film tax incentive programs. I live in Connecticut for the same reason.

To date, our company has worked with over eighty productions. We have also invested over *thirty million dollars* into building production infrastructure. Next week we will close on our third and by far largest facility here in Connecticut.

In my previous life, I was a film producer in Los Angeles and I have personally produced eight feature and cable films with budgets ranging from \$1M to \$60M.

Of those eight projects I produced, not one of those films spent 50% of their shooting schedule filming in a studio. Not one of those films spent much more than 5% of their shooting schedules filming in a studio. And a couple did not shoot in a studio at all.

I understand the intention of this bill. It is meant to spur the growth of new infrastructure in the state, but frankly, it is misguided and will have the direct opposite result.

Connecticut Film Center is in the studio business; more than anyone, we at CFC would love for movies to shoot more in studios, however that is just not how films are made.

To give an example, the movie "Old Dogs" shot just 20% of their production in our facility, but they kept us fully booked for 8 months. And more importantly, they spent over \$50M in the state. Under the proposed legislation, Old Dogs would not have come to Connecticut and we would not have built our facility.

If the legislature puts *unachievable* requirements on productions, movies like Old Dogs will never again return to this state. Take it from us, a company that is one of the intended beneficiaries of this bill, it flat out doesn't make sense. It will destroy the facilities business in Connecticut, not spur it's growth.

Another provision in this bill will also have a major chilling effect. The move from a tax credit to a rebate will create uncertainty that will keep TV and film production out of the state, and hamper efforts to build new infrastructure. No one wants to invest in an industry that lives or dies by a state's contentious annual budget negotiations.

The tax credit system is working. Productions are coming in, facilities are being built. Let's not mess up one of the few positive economic stories we have in Connecticut.

The real question is: Does Connecticut want to build this industry or not? Each time the legislature even consider bills like this, bills that, well-intended or not, gut the program, it drives the industry away – it undoes all the great work that has been done over the past three and a half years.

Let's work to build commerce in Connecticut, not scare it away.

Thank you.